

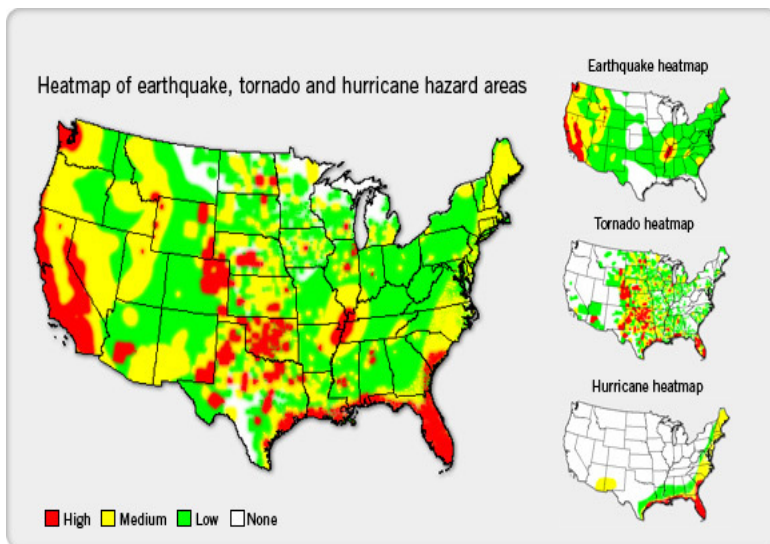
Southside Medical Reserve Corps Newsletter

Why We Don't Prepare: Confessions of a Laggard

I have a confession to make. I don't follow my own advice. I've been preaching the gospel of "prepare, prepare, prepare" for a little over four years now. I developed a sample kit to take around as "show-and-tell" to church, civic, school and business groups. I also prepared and gave out many lists of how to get yourself and your family ready for disasters. Oh yeah, I'm ready. I have a few things in the house; some gallons of water and canned tuna in the cabinets; blankets and clothes in the closets; and a manual can opener. So in the back of my head, I know I can throw all this stuff together and survive. Sorta'.

Until a couple of months ago; that was the extent of my preparation. Then I found myself facing a possible surgery that would have made me home-bound for a couple of weeks. My first thought was, "Ohmigod, I need to get some easy-to-fix food for my two-week ordeal." And then it hit me: **I should already be prepared!!** That got me to thinking and reading about why I didn't have all of my ducks-in-a-row. [The following is adapted from the Time Magazine article.]

Sadly, I'm in good (or bad) company. In a Time Magazine poll last year, about half of the people surveyed had personally experienced a natural disaster or emergency. And of this half, only about 16% considered themselves were "very well prepared" for the next one. For the rest of the people surveyed, about half explained their lack of preparedness by saying they didn't live in a high-risk area.

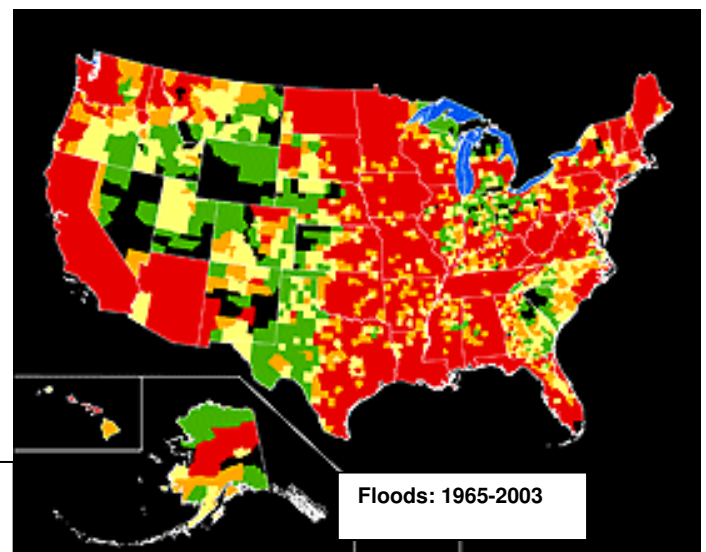


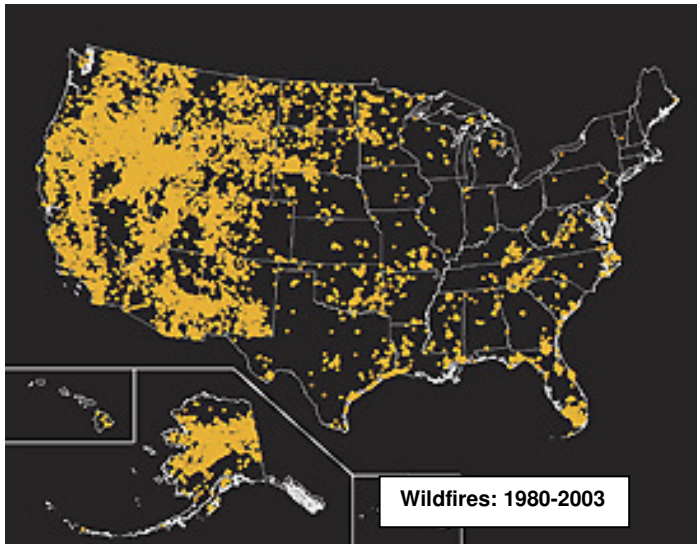
For floods, the saying goes, "if there's water, there is a chance of floods." That seems extreme to me, but the map to the right tells otherwise. It shows areas of flood-disaster declarations from 1965- 2003.

RED= 4 or more; ORANGE=3; YELLOW=2; and GREEN= 1.

Apologies to those reading this in black and white. The Rocky Mountain area is less prone to floods; everywhere else is subject to flooding.

In fact, about 91% of Americans live in a moderate-to-high risk area for earthquakes, wildfires, hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, high wind damage and/or terrorism. A close look at the following maps shows that there are not many "safe" areas in the USA. The earthquake map is more extensive than I thought; I didn't expect "warm or hot" spots this far East. It looks like if we're safe from earthquakes, then tornadoes will get us. And if we're safe from those two, hurricanes and winds will slap us around.





And wildfires affect a huge part of the country. The map to the left depicts wildfires of 250 or more acres from 1980 to 2003.

We just are not safe from all possible disasters. Historically, we humans get serious about avoiding disasters only after we have been “knocked over the head.” By all accounts, 2006 should have been a banner year for stocking up and getting ready. If we didn’t know it before, we should have learned from September 11th and Katrina that sometimes really bad things happen.

So what’s going on? If we cannot be trusted to take care of ourselves, then the government will step in and do it for us. That seems to be the justification for mandatory car insurance, smoking bans and seat-belt laws. But with disasters, the rules seem different. The message appears to be: “We’ll help build where you shouldn’t; rescue you when things go wrong; and help you rebuild in the same place.”

Coupled with trickle-down apathy and our aversion to being told what to do, a whopping 84% of Americans are not well prepared for the next disaster. Until I realized that I might be home-bound and needed to prepare, I can say truthfully I was suffering from **Denial**. The Four Stages of Denial Thinking go like this: First, it will not happen. Second, if it happens, it will not happen to me. Third: if it happens to me, it won’t be bad. And fourth: if it happens to me and it’s bad, there’s nothing I could do to stop it anyway. My denial thinking teetered between the second and third stages, depending on the potential disaster.

At some point, I realized it would take only a few minutes to get prepared. Hey, if the BIG one comes and it misses me, I’m still prepared. In fact, I’m now prepared for a bad disaster, but don’t take that as a hint, okay.

It took me about an hour to box my things up; not counting shopping. I ended up preferring five-gallon buckets with lids because they are easier to tote than boxes. I keep one bucket with dry food (beans, grains, nuts, protein bars, etc.) in my chest freezer- everything lasts longer that way. Before I had that brainstorm (and realized I’d been paying to keep a large empty freezer cold for three years), I kept these foods in Ziplock bags stashed in every nook and cranny of my smaller freezer.



I also have a bucket for my cats (well, not **the** cats,) complete with food, water, toys, litter and a pooper-scooper. Now, my home supply kits can be my go-kit if I have to evacuate; I just cart them to the car.

Not bad for a laggard, hey?



Avian Flu Update: A Close Call

A United States university recently confirmed the first transmission of bird flu from human to human. It happened in Indonesia last year when a woman on Sumatra caught the H5N1 bird flu virus from poultry, and passed it to other family members. Seven of eight family members who caught the disease died.

Authorities tell us that this situation tells us at least a couple of things: this particular H5N1 virus is capable of person-to-person transmission, and it mutated as it spread through the family. WHO is being very vigilant to find these clusters, to assess whether there's transmission and to stop the transmission as quickly as possible each time they arise. Researchers say in this case, a pandemic may have been averted because of the quick action of health authorities.

As of September 10, 2007 there have been 328 cases with 200 deaths.

Source: WHO website

MRC Volunteer Helps the American Red Cross

During hurricane season the American Red Cross will call out for volunteers. Our local MRC volunteers are always willing to support a local and sometimes a national Red Cross mission.

Several MRC volunteers have cross trained so they can also support the Red Cross in time of need. These individuals become dual volunteers. Nora Walker, a WIC nutrition assistant for VDH is one of those volunteers.

Nora was deployed to Florida on two different occasions with the Red Cross. Her jobs were far-ranging; from working in shelters to helping in the neighborhoods. In the shelters, she did whatever needed doing-serving food, packing lunches for kids, putting kids on the bus, cleaning the facilities and bathrooms. In the neighborhoods, she both helped victims get the assistance they needed, and delivered cleaning supplies to people to clean their houses. The Red Cross provided a lot of housing and food for many who had lost everything.

Nora says, "If you volunteer for disaster relief, you need to be willing to do whatever is needed. There are so many opportunities and the rewards are so great. The volunteers you meet, young, retired and from all over the country are working together as a team for the good of others."



If you would like to be one of the MRC volunteers that also supports our local Red Cross, please contact Kim at 738-6815 ext 113.

Training for November will be a Mass Flu Clinic in South Boston. We would like the clinic to be staffed mostly by volunteers so we can show how much we've learned and how good we are. Many of you have helped us in the past and now is a great time to show off your skills.

The date will be Nov. 7th, 8th or 15th, in the morning; so pencil us in. When I know more details, I'll let you know by a phone alert.

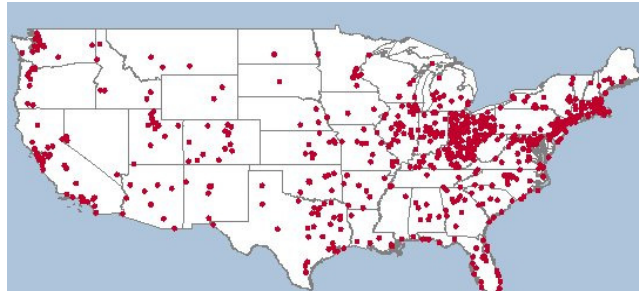
Call me and let me know you can help us conduct a great clinic.

Kim Bannister: 738-6815 ext 113

MRC Info

Active MRC Units: 699

Registered MRC Volunteers: 137,404



Dates	<u>Training & Location</u>	<u>Time</u>
Sept 18	Skywarn Community Memorial Healthcenter, Auditorium, South Hill ,VA	6 PM
Oct 22	Intro to Terrorism Community Memorial Healthcenter, Ed. Center Rm 103 , South Hill	6 PM
Oct 23	Intro to Terrorism Halifax Health Dept. Mary Bethune Complex, Halifax, VA	6 PM
Nov 7, 8 or 15	Drill---More info to follow if you can participate please let me know. Exact Date TBA	AM
Dec 17	Orientation & Preparedness Community Memorial Healthcenter, Ed. Center Rm 103 , South Hill	6 PM
Dec 18	Orientation & Preparedness Halifax Health Dept. Mary Bethune Complex, Halifax, VA	6 PM



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